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JOINT OPERATIONS IN THE VICKSBURG CAMPAIGN  
Unity of Command or Unity of Effort?

By

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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## *Introduction*

Joint operations, made possible by the unity of effort between Army and Navy commanders were critical to the Union success during the campaign for Vicksburg. Very little, if any, joint doctrine existed during the Civil War, at either the strategic or operational level. Although no official doctrine for joint operations or unity of command existed, the personalities of General Grant, General Sherman, and Admiral Porter, and their relationship with each other, facilitated cooperation, and allowed them to focus on a common objective; the capture of Vicksburg.

This analysis of the Vicksburg Campaign will first focus on the commanders, and their interrelationships. Next, it will provide an overview of the entire campaign. Then particular emphasis will be placed on the conduct of joint operations, and how unity of effort, rather than unity of command was essential to success. In concluding, it will address lessons learned from the Campaign, from a contemporary perspective.

Valuable lessons can be learned from studying joint operations from the past, even historical ones, such as Vicksburg. By analyzing them, we can discern principles of command, leadership, operations, and logistics, from both their successes, as well as their failures.

While history can not guarantee valid answers to every military question, past events frequently can illuminate present problems. Even though technology has changed the pace and increased the violence of war, many of the problems leaders and planners face today are similar to challenges met in earlier days. Learning the facts of military history, analyzing them in light of enduring principles, and applying them within the context of current military technologies and techniques is critical to success.<sup>1</sup>

The joint Army and Navy actions conducted at Vicksburg, provide excellent examples of joint operations for further study.

### *Commanders and Their Relationships with Each Other*

Ulysses Simpson Grant was an Ohio native, and a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point. After participating in the Mexican War with distinction, Grant had several personal problems that led to his purported over-consumption of alcohol, and his eventual resignation from the Army. After many failed endeavors in civilian life, Grant quickly offered his services at the outbreak of the war. Initially appointed a Colonel, he was quickly promoted to Brigadier General in August, 1861.

Retained by the War Department to keep an eye on Grant at Vicksburg, the distinguished former editor of the New York Tribune, Charles A. Dana became the general's eloquent advocate in his reports to Lincoln and Secretary of War Stanton. Grant, Dana wrote, was "not an original or brilliant man, but sincere, thoughtful, deep and gifted with courage that never faltered."<sup>2</sup>

At the time of the first actions at Vicksburg, General Grant had already gained national attention with the twin victories at Forts Henry and Donelson. His surrender demands on Fort Donelson led to him being dubbed "Unconditional Surrender" Grant, and a promotion to major general.<sup>3</sup> After these victories, he had a near disaster at the Battle of Shiloh, but after being reinforced and later assisted by naval gunfire, he succeeded in carrying the day. In each case, the Navy played an important part in General Grant's early military actions, leading to his appreciation for the benefits of cooperation between the two services.

Chief among Grant's many able lieutenants, was his friend and confidant, Major General William Tecumseh Sherman. Like Grant, Sherman's prewar years had been troubled. He also was a graduate of West Point, but missed the Mexican war, serving his years in California. Also like Grant, he resigned from the Army and took up civilian

ventures that included banking, practicing law, and school administration. Strongly opposed to secession, Sherman passionately longed for order in his life, and saw the Federal government as the country's best hope for maintaining order. When war came, Sherman volunteered to fight for the North, promising his misguided Southern friends a hard war and a soft peace. He would deliver on both promises.<sup>4</sup>

Sherman was appointed Colonel in May, 1861, and was later promoted to Brigadier in July, 1861. After participating in the first battle of Manassas, he was transferred to Kentucky, and then later went on to serve valiantly at Shiloh, where afterwards he was promoted to Major General in May, 1862.

Rear Admiral David Dixon Porter was Grant's naval counterpart at Vicksburg. He was the son of Captain David Porter of War of 1812 fame, the blood brother of Commander William D. Porter, and the foster brother of Admiral David G. Farragut.<sup>5</sup> His background was completely naval, having served with his father in the Mexican Navy against the Spanish, and later becoming a midshipman in the American Navy. Like General Grant, he also served in the Mexican war.

Admiral Porter prior to taking command of the Mississippi Squadron at Vicksburg, had also participated in the New Orleans campaign, as well as commanding a mortar boat flotilla in an earlier attempt to take Vicksburg. Porter had both his supporters and detractors.

Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles concluded that the rough work on the Mississippi required a young and creative officer; and a vigorous and hard hitting, Andrew Jackson type of fighter. Welles went on to describe Porter in his journal, "Porter is but a Commander, he has however stirring and positive qualities, is fertile in resources, has great energy, excessive and sometimes not over scrupulous ambition, is imposed with and boastful of his own powers...."<sup>6</sup>



Secretary of War Stanton labeled him a "gasbag", and journalist Sylvanus Cadwallader fairly sputtered when he wrote about Porter, calling him "by all odds the greatest humbug of the war."<sup>7</sup> The most important aspect of Admiral Porter was that he cooperated in near perfect harmony with his Army counterparts at Vicksburg.<sup>8</sup>

Without formalized joint doctrine or an established unity of command, the close working relationship between these commanders was essential to conducting effective and coordinated joint operations. Grant's feelings toward Sherman were those of intimacy, bound throughout the war by their shared experiences at Shiloh. During the campaign in Kentucky, Sherman had lost his command, and had been called insane, but when Grant visited him at Shiloh he was cool and at ease in the heat of the actual battle. When he wrote of the battle, long afterward, Grant remarked that on this first day of Shiloh, "I never deemed it important to stay long with Sherman."<sup>9</sup>

Grant, in a letter to Sherman, later in the war, "Whilst I have been eminently successful in this war, in at least gaining the confidence of the public, no one feels more than me how much of this success is due to the energy, skill and harmonious putting forth of that energy and skill, of those who it has been my good fortune to have occupying a subordinate position under me. There are many officers to whom these remarks are applicable to a greater or less degree, proportionate to their ability as soldiers, but what I want is to express my thanks to you and McPherson[one of Grant's Corps commanders at Vicksburg] as *the men* to whom, above all others, I feel indebted for whatever I have had of success."<sup>10</sup>

Soon after meeting each other, Grant and Porter both tried to size each other up. Grant got right to the point, "When can you move your fleet?" Porter replied, "Tomorrow or whenever you wish to start."<sup>11</sup>

The growth of mutual respect and harmony between Porter and Grant began at their first meeting. They shared similar qualities. Both exhibited a directness of character and expression. They both confronted problems head on and felt the same contempt for sham or pretense. More importantly, each understood his profession and could grasp complex situations in minute detail. Between them

however, no personal intimacy existed, and as time passed they simply functioned as two colleagues with common objectives.<sup>12</sup>

After the Vicksburg Campaign, Grant stated, "The Navy under Porter was all it could be during the entire campaign [which] could not have been made at all without such assistance. The most perfect harmony reigned between the two arms of the service."<sup>13</sup>

Sherman was one of Grant's biggest supporters throughout the war. When a northern official came to Sherman and tried to criticize Grant, Sherman responded, "It won't do sir; it won't do at all! Grant is a great General. He stood by me when I was crazy, and I stood by him when he was drunk. And now, by thunder, we stand by each other!"<sup>14</sup>

Unlike the relationship between Grant and Porter, Sherman became very close to Porter during the Vicksburg Campaign. When discussing strategy for Vicksburg, Sherman wasted no time bringing Porter into the scheme, writing, "It will be necessary [for you] to engage the Vicksburg batteries until I have broken their inland communications. Then Vicksburg must be attacked by land and river. In this I defer to you."<sup>15</sup> Their relationship would remain close after the war, with Sherman visiting Porter on his deathbed, one day before Sherman's own death.

Porter's relations with his counterparts were somewhat evolutionary. He began by not having much regard for West Pointers, and in fact initially looked forward to working with the political appointee, Major General John A. McClernand. Perhaps as Secretary Welles suspected, Admiral Porter feared the West Pointers might place him in a subordinate role.<sup>16</sup> Porter in a letter to Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Gustavus Fox, wrote, "I don't trust the Army. It is evident Grant is going to try to take Vicksburg without us[Navy], but he can't do it."<sup>17</sup> Porter's fear of being left out overcame his mistrust of the

Army, and he wrote to Generals Grant and Sherman offering his cooperation, and asking what the plans of the Army were. From that point on, Grant and Sherman kept Porter apprised of their movements. Porter, in all actuality had subordinated himself and his command to Grant and the Army.

When Porter and Grant met each other for the first time, they greeted each other warmly. Porter had studied and admired Grant's "bulldog" attack on Forts Henry and Donelson, and from that action, he observed a willingness on the part of the General to cooperate with the Navy.<sup>18</sup>

The conference with Grant made a lasting impression on Porter. In their hour together, he decided that some West Point men were not as inflated and pretentious as he had been led to believe. After Grant departed, Porter recalled his earlier letter to Fox, but in Grant, all he saw contradicted that impression. Not only did Grant seem focused on the objective, but also he manifested none of the Army superiority prevalent in other commands, and he reached out to Porter as an equal partner.<sup>19</sup>

Porter's view toward the Army was once again pleasantly surprised when he met General Sherman.

Sherman had the same unassuming demeanor as Grant, but the fiery look of a warrior. He had none of the trappings Porter attributed to West Pointers. Never had Porter met another man so open and direct – a man who seemed to have such a complete grasp of the situation. "Here was a working General, Porter recalled "who poked the fire and talked to me as if he had known me all his life."<sup>20</sup>

After the failure at Chickasaw Bluffs, McClelland took over Sherman's corps, and relegated him to a wing commander. Sherman tried to deal with his new superior diplomatically, but Porter would have no part of it. His earlier enthusiasm for working with a politically appointed General had dissipated. Porter was openly rude and told McClelland flatly, he would cooperate only in enterprises that Sherman commanded.<sup>21</sup>

Throughout the war, inter-service cooperation depended mainly on common goals and good will. There was little talk in the 1860's of appointing a single theater commander for both the Army and the Navy, let alone of creating a unified high command. That the system worked as well as it did was a tribute to the perspicacity of the Army and Navy commanders in the field and on station.<sup>22</sup> With the absence of unity of command, unity of effort was instrumental in the success of joint operations at Vicksburg. This was in large part brought about by the personalities and close professional relationships of the commanders.

### *Campaign Overview*

Abraham Lincoln recognized Vicksburg's significance. He clearly understood how the Mississippi could be used for shipping Confederate supplies, and that the railroads at Vicksburg could be used to distribute them throughout the South. As early as mid-November, 1861, the President, at a strategy meeting in Washington, pointed to a map and commented, "See what a lot of land these fellows hold, of which Vicksburg is the key. The war can never be brought to a close until that key is in our pocket. Let us get Vicksburg and all the country is ours." Points north and south of that town could be conquered, he concluded, "but they can still defy us from Vicksburg."<sup>23</sup> Grant also saw the strategic significance of capturing Vicksburg, and viewed it as the center of gravity for the western region.

Vicksburg had a population of about 5,000. The town stood on a 200 foot bluff on the eastern bank of the Mississippi, just downstream from where the river made a hairpin curve(See Figure 1). The area above Vicksburg was also full of bluffs, running inland, while the land near the river was low and full of marshes. The area east of the

river, was for the most part deemed impassable to both land forces and naval vessels. The area west of the river was seasonally inundated with water, and was also nearly impassable. North of the town, the Yazoo River blocked the landward approach, while further to the east, and south of the town, Confederate forces controlled the surrounding area. Confederate gun batteries had excellent positions from which to shell Union shipping, made even more effective by the hairpin curve, which forced vessels to slow their speed before attempting to pass the bluffs and the Vicksburg shoreline. Because of the terrain and formidable gun emplacements, Vicksburg was nearly impregnable, and soon became known as the Gibraltar of America.

The first phase of the campaign began in June of 1862 with two thwarted naval attempts to seize Vicksburg. These were followed by an unsuccessful amphibious assault in December by Sherman at Chickasaw Bluffs. After this failure, a number of attempts in the early months of 1863 were made in order to flank the city. These efforts included: attempts to re-route the river by digging the Lake Providence and DeSoto Point Canals, and joint expeditions through the Yazoo Pass and Steele's Bayou.

The next phase of the campaign began with Porter's gunboats and Army transports running the gauntlet of batteries at Vicksburg, and attempting to subdue the Confederate guns at Grand Gulf. Forced further south, Grant's army then crossed the Mississippi at Bruinsburg. After finally turning the Confederate flank, the Army engaged in a series of battles at Port Gibson, Raymond, Jackson, Champion Hill, Big Black River, and finally the assault on Vicksburg.

Failing twice to successfully assault and seize the city, the final phase of the campaign commenced with the siege of Vicksburg. The siege lasted 47 days, and entailed

near continuous shore and naval bombardment of the city, as well as mining attempts to breach the Confederate works. Confederate forces in the city finally surrendered on July 4, 1863.

### *Joint Operations* (See Figure 2)

Clausewitz understood the difficulty of conducting joint operations under the best of conditions, "The conduct of war resembles the working of an intricate machine with tremendous friction, so that combinations which are easily planned on paper can be executed only with great effort."<sup>24</sup> There was no national level joint command structure, or strategic guidance for the conduct of joint operations at Vicksburg.

Formulation of Army plans was the responsibility of the commanding general, subject to the approval by the president and his cabinet. Naval plans were devised by the Secretary or assistant secretary of the Navy. The higher military functions remained the prerogative of the civilian secretary. Furthermore, the secretaries were not required to cooperate, or even consult with one another, or with the general-in-chief.<sup>25</sup>

The military command structure was organized no more efficiently or effectively.

At the head of the Army was the senior major general.... This office was filled by executive appointment, had no legal status, and its authority was based solely upon the seniority of that individual in the regular Army. The command structure of the Navy was even more primitive. There was no chief of naval operations, nor was any one officer appointed commander of the U.S. Fleet so that he might consult directly in an official capacity with his Army counterpart. The lack of such an office, not to mention the lack of either an army or naval staff, was a serious obstacle to efficient combined operations.<sup>26</sup>

At the operational level, direction was not much better. When General Halleck was summoned to Washington to become general-in-chief, he left Grant no written instruction, nor apparently a verbal order about Vicksburg or cooperation with the Navy on the Mississippi.<sup>27</sup> Grant advised Halleck of his concern for the apparent absence of a

comprehensive strategy for operations in the West, "You have never suggested to me any plan of operations in this department."<sup>28</sup>

Porter on the other hand, was given full authority. His chain of command ran directly to the Secretary of the Navy, not to the local Army commander. The Western Gunboat Fleet was transferred from the War Department to the Navy Department, and Porter was expected to cooperate fully with Grant.<sup>29</sup>

Given this state of affairs, it is a credit to the operational commanders' resourcefulness that the Union was able to conduct successful military operations, let alone successful joint operations. Ironically, as it turned out, these two independent commanders cooperated more fully and with greater success than any of their predecessors who were, at least on paper, intimately linked.<sup>30</sup>

The first of the joint operations began with two unsuccessful attempts involving naval forces and embarked troops under the command of Admiral David G. Farragut in New Orleans, and Captain Charles H. Davis in Cairo, IL. The first attempt saw Farragut's fleet, with 1,500 soldiers embarked, sail north to Vicksburg and demand its surrender. After realizing that the city would not surrender, and that he had insufficient troops to force it to do so, he returned to New Orleans.

Soon after his return to New Orleans, Farragut was directed by President Lincoln to once again, try and seize Vicksburg. This time, he took nearly 3,500 troops and the mortar flotilla of then Commander Porter. After successfully passing the Vicksburg guns, he met up with the gunboats of Captain Davis. Even after shelling the Vicksburg defenses with both Davis's gunboats and Porter's mortars, very little damage was done, and the operation soon turned into a stalemate.

In the summer of 1862, after these initial failures to capture Vicksburg, Farragut wrote to his chief of staff, "I will not attempt to take another place without troops to hold

it."<sup>31</sup> Porter summed up his feelings in his report to Farragut, "It is to be regretted that a combined [joint] attack of army and navy had not been accomplished. Such an attack would have resulted, I think in the capture of the city. Ships and mortar vessels can keep full possession of the river...but they can not crawl up hills 300 feet high, and it is that part which must be taken by the Army."<sup>32</sup>

Although New Orleans and Baton Rouge had surrendered without a fight, not every river town would capitulate by threat. Lincoln and Welles now understood that no naval force could take cities like Vicksburg without an adequate army, and Stanton finally admitted that Grant needed more than a few gunboats to support his campaigns. Since all the strategists agreed on the importance of controlling the Mississippi, Lincoln, Welles, and Stanton finally admitted that the only way to accomplish it was by well-coordinated joint attacks.<sup>33</sup>

These early attempts at joint operations clearly did not focus the necessary resources on the objective, nor did they adhere to the principle of mass, in concentrating the necessary mix of combat power at the place and time to achieve decisive results. These initial attempts showed the need for closer coordination and cooperation between the services, and that joint operations would be vital to success at Vicksburg.

The second joint operation was Sherman's amphibious assault on Chickasaw Bluffs. While Grant attacked in northern Mississippi to fix the Confederates in place, and divert their attention, Sherman and three divisions in transports, supported by Admiral Porter's gunboats attempted to establish a toehold on the bluffs above Vicksburg. Grant soon found his supply lines cut off by Confederate cavalry, and withdrew. Sherman, unaware of Grant's withdrawal continued the landing at Chickasaw Bluffs. Because of saturated landing areas, and heavily fortified Confederate positions, the operation failed, but not due to the lack of cooperation between Sherman and Porter. During the battle,



Admiral Porter rendered considerable artillery support, and had even sent for additional mortar schooners.

Sherman tersely summed up the campaign to General Halleck, "I reached Vicksburg at the time appointed, landed, assaulted, and failed." Porter, however did not give up. On January 1<sup>st</sup> he wrote Sherman, "Man proposes, God disposes. It's alright, what's next?"<sup>34</sup> Welles encouraged Porter after the unsuccessful attack, "The flaming Army correspondence misleads nobody, keep cool, be very modest under great success as a contrast to the soldiers...it must come from you and Grant to really open the river."<sup>35</sup> Even after another failure, the commanders knew the key to victory was outflanking the Confederates through joint Navy and Army operations.

After the Chickasaw Bayou failure, McClernand took over, and he, Sherman and Porter planned and executed a successful attack on Arkansas Post. Although a very successful joint naval and army endeavor, Grant felt that it was an unnecessary waste of effort, and that it diverted their resources from their primary goal of Vicksburg. Three times Union forces had assaulted Vicksburg (Farragut twice, and Sherman at Chickasaw Bluffs), and three times they had failed. Grant was determined not to repeat their experiences. In mid-January he gave up any idea of a two-pronged approach to the city. He would attack with a single army, and he would personally lead them.<sup>36</sup>

Next, Grant's forces often supported by naval assets, embarked on a series of attempts to bypass the guns at Vicksburg. These Bayou Expeditions entailed diverting the Mississippi by digging canals, but also depended on the Union boats to navigate the waterways around Vicksburg. Attempts were made at Lake Providence, above Vicksburg, and at DeSoto Point, across from Vicksburg, both unsuccessful. During these strenuous

endeavors, often in terrible weather conditions, Porter's flagship became the temporary headquarters of the joint commands, with Grant and his subordinates coming there daily for conferences. Once again, Porter was offering his services for the common good.

In another attempt to flank Vicksburg, Grant sent a joint expedition through the Yazoo Pass in order to get above the city and take the enemy by surprise. Crucial to success was getting through the pass before any defense or obstructions could be built. Confederate forces however, had constructed defenses at what was called Fort Pemberton, and these defenses combined with indecisiveness on the part of the naval commander, and a lack of coordination with the Army, caused the expedition to fail. No joint operation in the Vicksburg Campaign better exemplified the need for unity of command; unity of effort in this case was not enough.

As the Yazoo Pass expedition was underway, Admiral Porter devised another route by which the upper area of Vicksburg could be reached. After consulting with Grant, he commenced the Steele's Bayou expedition. If successful, it would take pressure off the forces bogged down in the Yazoo Pass, and might achieve the high ground behind the city. Porter's plan was to navigate through a series of waterways until he reached the Yazoo. The effort was at first promising, with Grant initially accompanying Porter, he was optimistic that the whole army could be sent to the upper Yazoo.

The expedition soon got bogged down, running into obstacles in the narrow channels, and being harassed by fire from the shore. At one point, the ships' passage was blocked in both directions, and Porter quickly sent for help from Sherman. Sherman arrived too late to salvage the expedition, but just in time to save Porter from disaster. Porter's experience at Steele's Bayou taught him an important lesson – he would never get

much done in the river without the support of the Army. He went on to say, "I never knew how helpless a thing an ironclad could be when unsupported by troops."<sup>37</sup>

Once again Grant looked for a way to bypass Vicksburg. A new route laid along the west bank, where he could cross all his forces to the east bank below Vicksburg. For the plan to work, he needed Porter to run the Vicksburg batteries and position himself below the city. After committing his finest vessels to the operation, Porter assumed the additional responsibility of preparing and supervising the movement of Grant's transports. Lukewarm on the expedition, Porter never hesitated to support Grant.<sup>38</sup> Porter ran the gauntlet with little damage to the fleet, while both Grant and Sherman looked on. Although Porter cautioned Grant prior to the operation, their unity of effort and cooperation toward a common objective prevailed.

Prior to crossing the river, Grant had to contend with the Confederate fortifications at Grand Gulf. It was necessary to reduce these batteries, and Porter believed this was a task for the Navy.<sup>39</sup> One of the most vicious battles of the campaign, Porter's squadron won the upper hand, but the Confederates were not driven out, and the gunboats paid a heavy price. Since the batteries had not been eliminated, Grant decided to do much what Porter had originally recommended, he would land unopposed at Bruinsburg, and flank the fortifications at Grand Gulf.<sup>40</sup>

While Porter's gunboats re-engaged the Grand Gulf fortifications, and Grant's army was being ferried across to Bruinsburg, joint deception operations were also occurring. Sherman, along with Lieutenant Commander K. Randolph Breese, the senior naval officer in the Yazoo, made a demonstration in force against the bluffs above Vicksburg.<sup>41</sup> Together with Colonel Benjamin Grierson's raid, the joint feint tied up

considerable Confederate forces, and confused Confederate commanders as to the true nature of the attack.

After Grant's crossing, Admiral Porter continued to provide naval support for logistics, and was instrumental in keeping the lines of communication open along the river. Naval gunboats, dispatched by Admiral Porter, also assisted in repelling a Confederate attack from the west on Milliken's Bend. Additionally, naval forces prevented any large scale Confederate attempts to break the siege by crossing the Mississippi. During the siege itself, Porter's gunboats provided naval bombardment, and he even went so far as to give Grant siege guns, as well as crews to man them.<sup>42</sup> Naval gunfire was also coordinated with the Army's assaults on the Vicksburg fortifications. The siege of Vicksburg displayed Army and Navy unity of effort at its best.

After the surrender of Vicksburg, General Grant came aboard Porter's flagboat, Blackhawk. The General and the Admiral exchanged congratulations, and Porter gave orders to open the wine he had saved for the occasion.<sup>43</sup> Porter later wrote Sherman, "The visit of these officers on such an occasion was the most gratifying event of my life." In his journal he saw their gesture as an unpretending acknowledgement on the part of the Army of the services performed by the Navy.<sup>44</sup>

Porter in summing up the campaign, credited the capture of Vicksburg to the Army and Grant's good planning.<sup>45</sup> After the war, then President Grant, declared, "Porter is as great an admiral as Horatio Nelson." Lincoln said, "The Father of Waters again goes unvexed to the sea."<sup>46</sup> The nation acknowledged both Grant and Porter as heroes.

## *Conclusion*

George Washington in his fourth rule of war said, "Nothing is so important in war as an undivided command." Napoleon adopted the same principle in his sixty-fourth Maxim: "Nothing is more important in war than unity of command." The operations in the Vicksburg Campaign were successful more because of unity of effort, rather than unity of command. With the absence of a structured, formalized doctrine for joint operations, this unity of effort was brought about by the personal rapport between generals and admirals. Their special relationships help build a foundation for joint efforts and the pursuit of a common objective. In the case of the Vicksburg Campaign, unity of effort in pursuit of a common cause, was able to successfully overcome the paucity of unity of command.

Joint operations were instrumental in the success at Vicksburg. They permeated every phase of the campaign. The Army could not have moved freely along the waterways without the Navy, and the Navy was dependent upon ground support for security, and seizing objectives. Naval gunfire played a critical role in the attack on Grand Gulf, and was especially important during the siege. Naval forces also were vital to logistics efforts, and deception operations. According to some military analysts, the whole campaign was a model of joint operations for its time.

The challenges inherent in coordinating different military forces have existed since armies became distinct from navies. The nation-states of ancient Greece that maintained both armies and navies faced the same challenges of joint coordination that General Grant and Admiral Porter addressed at the battle of Vicksburg.<sup>47</sup>

The close relationship between the Navy and Army that was born during the capture of Forts Henry and Donelson, was forged in steel during the crucible of Vicksburg.

### *Lessons Learned*

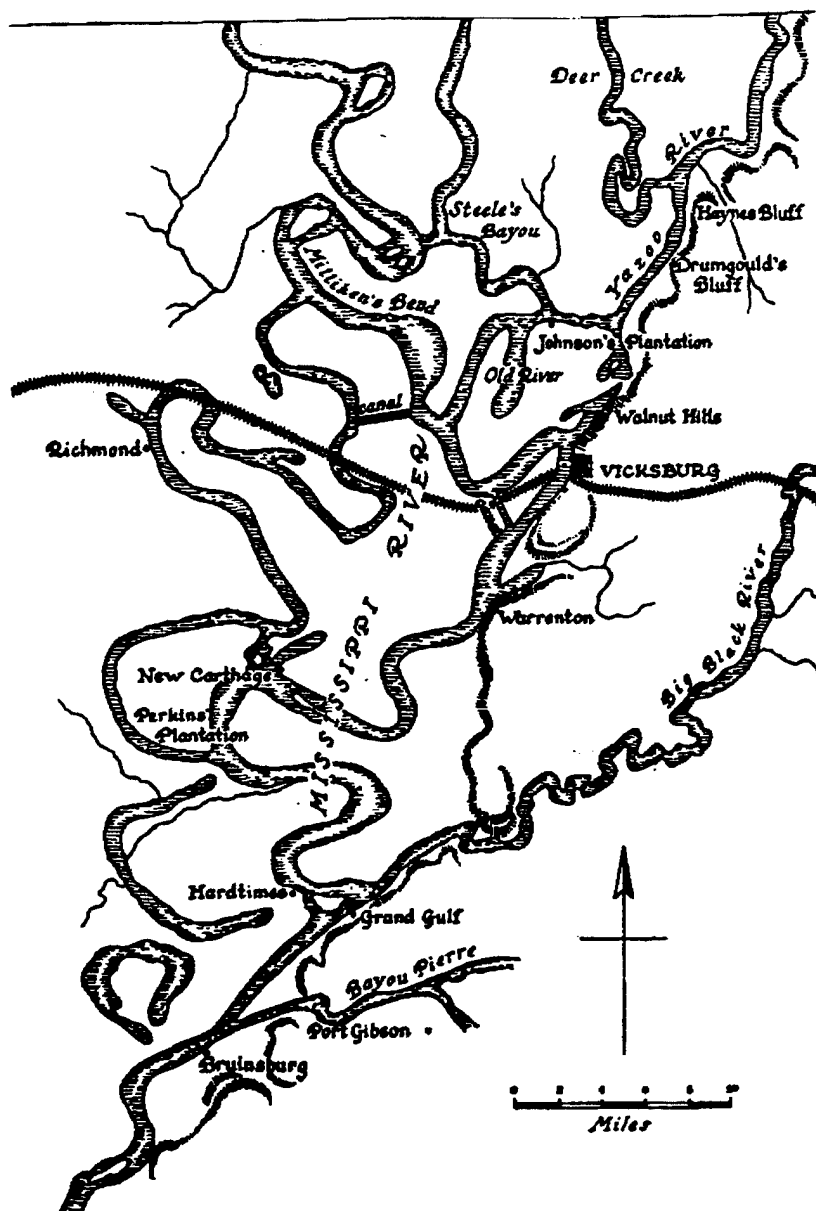
Joint operations were an important part of U.S. military campaigns in the past, and will be even more critical in future campaigns. We must learn from the past, while attempting to apply the principles to contemporary problems. Like Grant and Porter at Vicksburg, knowing and understanding the capabilities of counterparts in other services will lead to a greater appreciation for the unique skills they bring to the operation, and will allow better cooperation and coordination.

While unity of effort between Grant, Sherman, and Porter was highly effective, it was also dependent on their personalities, capabilities, and their relationship with each other. Without a systematized unity of command, future campaigns may not be as successful as Vicksburg. There is no guarantee that the same type of commanders will participate in future operations. One service may attempt to dominate the actions of the campaign, or refuse to participate in achieving certain objectives, both to the detriment of the overall mission. Unity of command ensures unity of effort under a single commander, and unity of effort is an essential complement to unity of command.<sup>48</sup> Shortly after the campaign, in correspondence to Admiral Porter, General Sherman commented,

“It is done, and the day of our nation’s birth is consecrated and baptized anew in a victory won by the United Army and Navy of our country. God grant that the harmony and mutual respect that exist between our respective commanders, and shared by all true men of the joint service, may continue forever, and serve to elevate our national character, threatened with shipwreck.”<sup>49</sup>

FIGURE 1

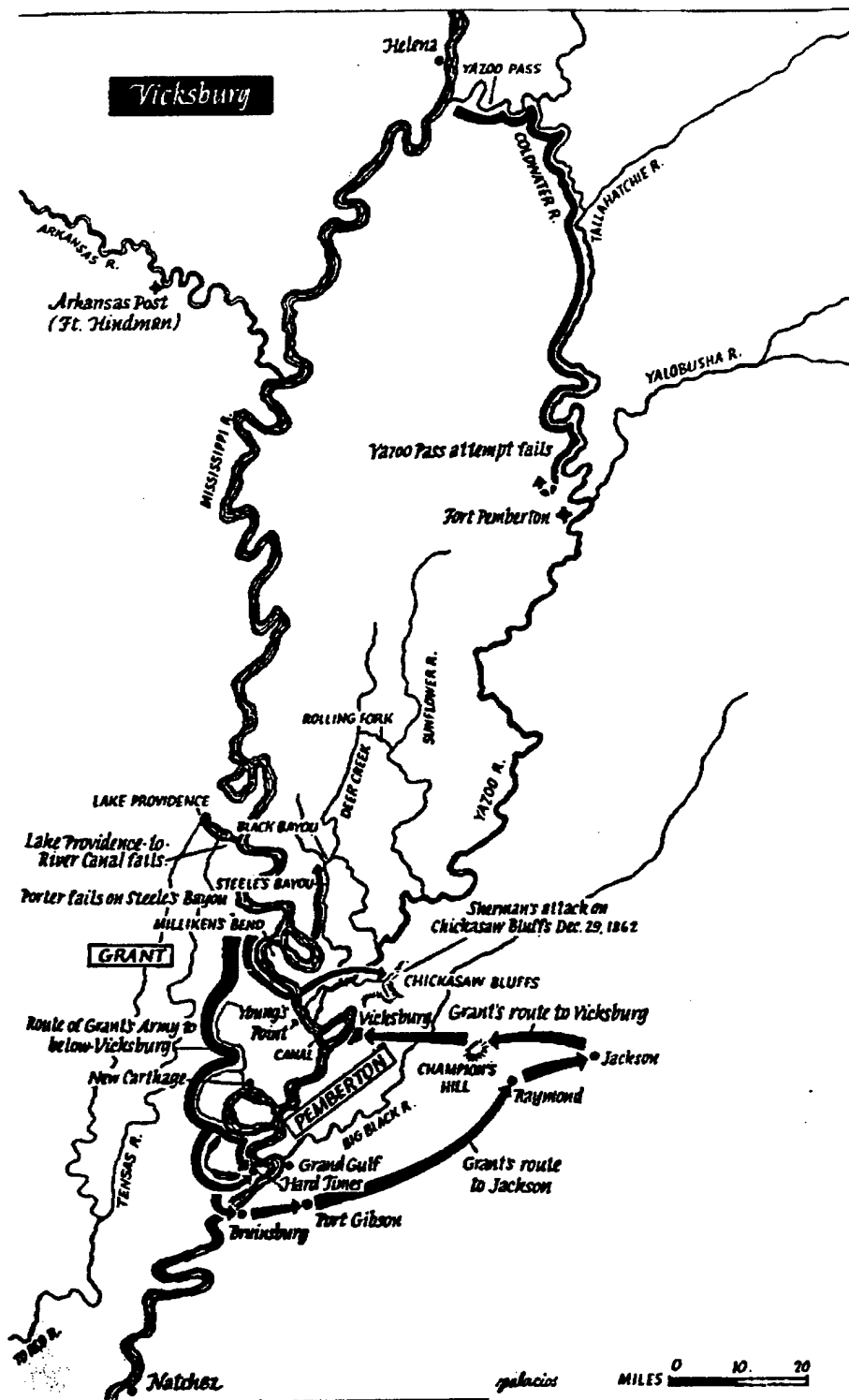
Vicksburg and Vicinity



Source: John D. Milligan, Gunboats Down the Mississippi (Annapolis, MD: United States Naval Institute, 1965).

FIGURE 2

Map of the Vicksburg Campaign



Source: Bruce Catton, This Hallowed Ground (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company Inc., 1956).



## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Military Operations Historical Collection (JMOHC) (Washington, D.C.: July 15, 1997), vii.
- <sup>2</sup> Jerry Corn and the Editors of Time-Life Books, The Civil War, War on the Mississippi, Grant's Vicksburg Campaign (Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books, 1985), 104.
- <sup>3</sup> Michael B. Ballard, The Campaign for Vicksburg Civil War Series (Conshohocken, PA: Eastern National Park and Monument Association, 1996), 6.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.
- <sup>5</sup> John D. Milligan, Gunboats Down the Mississippi (Annapolis, MD: United States Naval Institute, 1965), 95.
- <sup>6</sup> Richard S. West Jr., Gideon Welles, Lincoln's Navy Department (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1943), 201.
- <sup>7</sup> Corn and the Editors of Time-Life Books, 78.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.
- <sup>9</sup> Bruce Catton, Grant Moves South (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1960), 229.
- <sup>10</sup> General Ulysses S. Grant, Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant, Selected Letters 1839-1865 (New York: The Library of America, 1990), 1046.
- <sup>11</sup> Chester G. Hearn, Admiral David Dixon Porter (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1996), 154.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.
- <sup>13</sup> General Ulysses S. Grant, Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant, Volume 1 (New York: Webster, 1886), 574.
- <sup>14</sup> Richard Wheeler, The Siege of Vicksburg (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1978), 75.
- <sup>15</sup> Hearn, 153.
- <sup>16</sup> Milligan, 96.
- <sup>17</sup> Hearn, 153.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 154.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 156.
- <sup>21</sup> Paul Lewis, Yankee Admiral -- A Biography of David Dixon Porter (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1968), 135.
- <sup>22</sup> Milligan, 93.
- <sup>23</sup> James M. McPherson, ed., Battle Chronicles of the Civil War, 1863 (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1989), 100.

<sup>24</sup> Michael Howard and Peter Paret, ed., Carl Von Clausewitz, On War (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 17.

<sup>25</sup> Rowena Reed, Combined Operations in the Civil War (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1978), ix.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, xiii.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 228.

<sup>28</sup> Timothy H. Donovan Jr., The American Civil War (Wayne, NJ: Avery Publishing Group, 1987), 70.

<sup>29</sup> William M. Fowler Jr., Under Two Flags, The American Navy in the Civil War (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1990), 197.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Ivan Musicant, Divided Waters, The Naval History of the Civil War (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1995), 280.

<sup>32</sup> Hearn, 132.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 164.

<sup>35</sup> West, 208.

<sup>36</sup> Fowler, 207.

<sup>37</sup> Hearn, 191.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.

<sup>39</sup> Lewis, 143.

<sup>40</sup> Fowler, 217.

<sup>41</sup> Milligan, 158.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 170.

<sup>43</sup> Lewis, 146.

<sup>44</sup> Milligan, 176.

<sup>45</sup> Hearn, 236.

<sup>46</sup> Richard Wheeler, "The Siege of Vicksburg," American Heritage, The Magazine of History, June 1976, 75.

<sup>47</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff (JMOHC), v.

<sup>48</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, Doctrine for Joint Operations (Joint Pub 3-0) (Washington, D.C.: February 1, 1995), A-2.

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<sup>49</sup> John W. Tindall, "Joint Operations and the Vicksburg Campaign" (Unpublished Research Paper, U.S. Army Command and Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS: 1993.

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1976, 66-75.